

**MINUTES  
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE  
PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS  
BOARD ROOM  
MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2022 7:00P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: President Hayes; Trustees: Baldino, Bertucci, Canty, Grasse, LaBedz, Scaletta, Schwingbeck and Tinaglia

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Randy Recklaus, Village Manager; Diana Mikula, Assistant Village Manager; Charles Perkins, Director of Planning & Community Development; Avis Meade, Communications & Outreach Coordinator; Kim Peterson, Recording Secretary

**SUBJECTS:**

A. Village Rebranding Update

Other Business

Adjournment

President Hayes called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

President Hayes advised that there is just one item on the agenda tonight, which is Village Rebranding Update. President Hayes acknowledged that there is one member of the audience that wishes to address the Board on an item that is not on the agenda, therefore he asked the Board if anyone objected to allowing this citizen to speak now, which no one objected.

Carl Lund, Arlington Heights resident, stated that he decided to come speak to the Board because he is afraid the residents are being left out of the decision-making process of the sale of the Arlington Park property. Mr. Lund read several articles from neighboring communities regarding certain projects they are considering and how they are asking for public input before finalizing plans. Mr. Lund is asking the Board to not turn our Village into Rosemont, Wrigleyville or Randhurst Village.

President Hayes advised that the Board is not at the decision-making point yet, as nothing formal has been submitted to them. President Hayes assured Mr. Lund and all of the residents of Arlington Heights that they will have a full and fair opportunity to weigh in and provide public input as they go through this process.

## **New Business**

### **A. Village Rebranding Update**

Mr. Recklaus advised that back in 2018-2019, the Village Board began discussions about whether or not the Village should reevaluate its brand. The Village sent out a request for proposals (RFP) and ultimately hired Springboard Creative Strategy to engage in this process with the Village. Mr. Recklaus explained how the project unfortunately got put on hold because of the pandemic, however Staff felt like this is a good time to restart the process and allow Springboard to present their initial thoughts and findings based on the research they have done, and what to expect in the months ahead.

Rob Rosenberg, Owner & President, Springboard Brand & Creative Strategy, LTD, explained how he will be sharing an overview of where his company is at with this project, as they have been working on this on and off for a couple of years. Mr. Rosenberg advised that he would be discussing the goals, key findings and implications from the online focus groups they conducted, competitive assessment, marketing and communication activity, as well as brand thinking in terms of tagline development, logo usage and identity. Mr. Rosenberg explained how it is really important to have a consistent identity, especially in today's social media world.

Mr. Rosenberg explained how his company is a branding agency located here in Arlington Heights and was brought on to evaluate and update the Village's current marketing efforts. Mr. Rosenberg advised that the process began with a kick-off meeting to confirm goals and challenges, an assessment of competitors websites, five online focus groups with a variety of constituents, as well as key findings and recommendations of Staff.

Mr. Rosenberg addressed the challenges and goals, including how competition has grown among the municipalities, as everyone is striving to bring residents, visitors and businesses to their area. Mr. Rosenberg explained how the Village branding and marketing communications was really seen as needing a fresh approach in order to be able to compete today, which includes creating a consistent look and feel across all channels of communication. Other key challenges and goals include drawing people from outside the community to come here for events and support the businesses, and not just in the downtown area, driving up business investments, attracting new, young buyers, as well as the issue of brand identity and how our Village's is quite fragmented and in need of a strong update.

Mr. Rosenberg shared some of the key findings and implications for the branding, which were made from the audits and online focus groups that were conducted. Mr. Rosenberg explained how these are perceptions from these groups and not Springboard's analysis, which is really what matters in branding. The 11 key findings and implications are as follows: Arlington Heights is a well-established community with a very rich history; Arlington Heights needs to raise awareness of its very forward thinking, innovative side; Diversity and Inclusion are critical elements of the refreshed brand; Arlington Heights offers original businesses, dining and other entertainment options; Arlington Heights offers a city-like

experience while also very safe and accessible; A.H. is more than just downtown; Discover Arlington tagline– feedback was indifferent; online presence doesn't fully encompass or reflect all the Village has to offer; communications audit reveals consistency of content, but lacks uniformity; competition is perceived to be growing and active in terms of promotion; success from the engagement – what will make the Village successful.

Mr. Rosenberg advised that these key findings and implications led his team to do some preliminary brand thinking, meaning they have taken all of this information and are using it to determine where to go with the brand. Mr. Rosenberg explained how it is important, before they get into applications, identities, taglines or slogans, to have a positioning statement or brand statement that everyone agrees with. The starting point is to figure out where we are now, where we want to be and to start transitioning from traditional to transformational. Mr. Rosenberg explained how in terms of branding implications, a good brand has a tone and personality, and from a tagline standpoint, it has to be applicable to all groups and consistent. In terms of identity, it should be bold, powerful, not tied to a specific feature or attraction and support the brand. Mr. Rosenberg shared a few examples his team came up with in terms of possible taglines, including "Arlington Heights – Live it Up", "Take it to the Heights", "AH mazing", "Arlington Heights – As Unique as You."

Mr. Rosenberg explained the next steps in this process, which are to further explore and develop a tagline based on feedback from Staff and the committee, engage in identity development, create and share some print and digital applications, work with the Staff and team to develop the implementation, budget, timing and launch plan.

Mr. Recklaus advised that Staff is not looking for anything formal tonight, they just felt like it was a good time to present an update on the rebranding initiative and get some feedback from the Board.

President Hayes thanked Mr. Rosenberg for his presentation and for getting out there in there in the community and talking to the stakeholders and interest groups, as it is very important to get feedback from all segments from the community to come up with a common brand and tagline that represents everyone.

Trustee Tinaglia asked Mr. Rosenberg how long a brand typically lasts, which Mr. Rosenberg stated it usually takes about two years to become fully developed and once the brand is recognized and used on a daily basis, it should last about seven to eight years. The brand can be refreshed annually if needed. Trustee Tinaglia asked Mr. Recklaus how long the Village has been working with the current brand, "Discover Arlington," which he stated approximately 15 – 20 years. Mr. Rosenberg advised that so much has happened and so much has changed in these last 15 – 20 years, that it is time to do something. Trustee Tinaglia explained how he is not impressed with any of the other surrounding community's taglines they were shown during the presentation, and how he likes "AH mazing."

Trustee Canty thanked Mr. Rosenberg for his presentation, stating that she especially liked the part indicating that the brand/logo should not be tied to one

particular business or entity. Trustee Canty asked Mr. Rosenberg if he is going to develop a guide book for the rebranding, so that the Village can be consistent across all platforms, which Mr. Rosenberg stated that this is an absolute must and that he will be working with Staff to develop this. Trustee Canty indicated that she likes the tagline "AH mazing," as well as "Live it Up." Trustee Canty advised that she wants to make sure the word community is captured in the rebranding effort.

Trustee Bertucci asked if Mr. Rosenberg has any statistics regarding the comments that were made by those in the focus groups, which Mr. Rosenberg stated that they typically look for a theme that emerges from redundant quotes, which is how they formulate the comments they present. Trustee Bertucci asked Mr. Rosenberg if he knows what percentage the Asian Community represents in Arlington Heights, which Mr. Rosenberg stated he does not. Trustee Bertucci advised that the Asian Community represents approximately 10% of population in Arlington Heights and believes this is an important factor to consider in the rebranding process. Trustee Bertucci stated that he likes the tagline "Take it to the Heights" and the direction the Village is going with rebranding its image.

Trustee Schwingbeck thanked Mr. Rosenberg for his presentation and asked him who on the present Village Board his team spoke with during the discussion phase of this process, which Mr. Rosenberg stated that his team talked with President Hayes and possibly some former Board members. Trustee Schwingbeck advised that he is happy that Mr. Rosenberg is bringing in and having discussions with a wide range of people, as things change and they need to look to the future.

Trustee LaBedz explained how she is concerned that those living outside of the downtown area may not feel as connected to the community as those living in and around the downtown feel and wants to be sure that this issue is addressed as they move forward with this rebranding project. Mr. Rosenberg advised that the launch part of this project is really important so that everyone feels engaged in the process. Trustee LaBedz stated that it is really important that everyone who lives in town feels as much a part of Arlington Heights, and looks forward to the next steps.

President Hayes advised that he really likes the tagline "One Arlington," as it very much represents that sense of community, although unfortunately it has already been used.

Trustee Baldino stated that he is thankful that Mr. Rosenberg has been retained and is doing this work for the Village. Trustee Baldino agrees that the rebranding effort should not be focused on just one business or the downtown area, and is excited about the direction this project is going in. Trustee Baldino likes the tagline "AH mazing Heights," which is a combination of "AH mazing" and "Take it to the Heights."

Trustee Scaletta stated that he believes it is going to be a big challenge to come up with a tagline that encompasses everything the Village of Arlington Heights has to offer. Trustee Scaletta explained how everyone on the Board truly wants everyone to be represented, whether it's a business or the residents, and thinks that it is important to market outside of just the downtown. Trustee Scaletta stated that

they will need to decide who their audience is as they move forward with this rebranding effort, and is eager to see where this project goes.

Mr. Recklaus advised that there are a lot of different audiences and the challenge will be targeting all of these different groups and find a commonality that brings everyone together.

Trustee Grasse explained how important it is to focus on community during this process and figure out what the story we are trying to tell is, where we want to go and that everyone has a place here and is welcome. Trustee Grasse likes the tagline "Arlington Heights - As Unique as You," but doesn't feel it as catchy as some of the others.

Trustee Tinaglia asked if we are going to be direct with our rebranding and determine what we want our target audience to experience or are we going to allow people to interpret it as they wish, which Mr. Rosenberg stated that we should let people think what they want to think.

Melissa Cayer, resident of Arlington Heights, asked what the Village's top three assets are, which President Hayes stated that this is part of the process and they are currently trying to identify to bring into the brand. Ms. Cayer also asked what the status is of the Village's online building permit process, which Mr. Recklaus stated that they are making a lot of improvements online, including more digital ways to apply for permits, including building permits, as well as an update to the website.

President Hayes thanked Mr. Rosenberg and his team for all of the hard work they have done so far, as there are a lot of interesting ideas and good progress is being made.

### **Adjournment**

Trustee Tinaglia moved, seconded by Trustee LaBedz, to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m. Upon a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.